

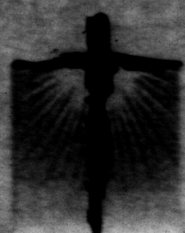
Happy Easter from

# Record

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MISSISSIPPI  
BAPTISTS

## Ministerial program celebrated at BMC

By William H. Perkins Jr.  
Editor

Blue Mountain College (BMC) paused on March 31 to commemorate 50 years of ministerial education at the school and also to honor one of its longest-serving faculty members.

Blue Mountain trustees voted exactly a half-century ago to begin the ministerial education curriculum, allowing men to attend classes for the first time at the women-only school affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Kermit McGregor, longtime Mississippi pastor and former two-term president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, was one of the first "preacher boys" to sign up for classes at the college. He was already married to Phyllis, who enrolled at BMC the next year. Forty-eight years ago this spring, they became the first married couple to graduate together from the school.

Blue Mountain College provided him with a "marvelous foundation," Kermit told the crowd, while Phyllis said, "I shall always be grateful for Blue Mountain college preparing me to be a wife, teacher, mother, and nurse."

"The impact of the ministerial program at Blue Mountain College over the past fifty years is beyond measure," said BMC President Bettye Rogers Coward. Ministers in all areas of denominational life have made and are continuing to make a difference wherever they go.

The college also recognized Douglas C. Bain Jr., chair of the Department of Biblical and Associated Studies and professor



**GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY** — Jason Middleton, president of the Blue Mountain Ministerial Association, offers the invocation March 31 at the 50th anniversary celebration of ministerial education on the campus of the Baptist-affiliated college in Blue Mountain. Arrayed behind Middleton are the program personalities for the anniversary celebration. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

of Biblical Studies, with a special tribute for his 31 years of service.

Reggie Bridges, pastor of First Church in Zachary, La., and a 2000 graduate of the BMC ministerial education program, led the tribute to Bain and observed, "Sitting in your class was more than an academic exercise; it was a spiritual experience."

Coward also praised Bain after the ceremony. "For over three decades Dr. Douglas C. Bain, Jr. has enriched the lives of the students and faculty at Blue Mountain College through his

scholarly teaching, academic and personal counseling, and his exemplary living. The expressions of gratitude from former and current students regarding his stellar performance as Professor of Biblical Studies remind all of us that faculty give life to programs," she said.

Blue Mountain College was founded in 1873 by Confederate Brigadier General Mark Perrin Lowrey, a village preacher before the Civil War who saw the importance of providing a education for women.

The women-only college was independently owned and administered until 1920, when control was turned over to the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

The school began offering a coordinate academic program for men preparing for church-related vocations in 1956 at the request of the Convention. On October 4 of last year, the Board of Trustees of Blue Mountain College voted to make all programs offered by the College available to male students, thus making BMC co-educational.

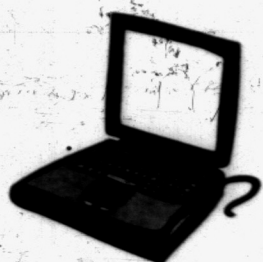
## Miss. CP sets record

Mississippi Baptists shattered yet another Mississippi Cooperative Program (CP) record last month by giving \$3,255,033 to the work of the Lord — easily the largest March amount in Mississippi CP history, according to Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board which disburses the funds. The previous March record was in 2004, with the giving of \$3,010,934. The March 2006 total is 16.7% higher than the \$2,788,353 given last month, and 18.4% above than the \$2,749,194 given in the same period in 2005. Total Mississippi CP giving for the current fiscal year, which runs from January-December, is \$9,541,109, 10.6% above last year's giving in the same period and 21.8% ahead of current year budget needs. The 2006 Mississippi CP budget of \$31,314,491, was approved by messengers to the 2005 annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. A total of \$2,609,541 is needed each month to meet the convention board's budget for 2006. In addition to helping support more than 10,700 missionaries in the U.S. and around the world through affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, Mississippi CP also helps fund such programs as the Senior Adult Choir Festival on April 25 at Hillcrest Church in Byram, and the Witnessing Through Media Conference on May 5 at Park Place Church, Brandon.

## SBC CP ahead of budget

NASHVILLE, Tn. (BP) — Contributions through the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Cooperative Program (CP) for March were \$18,328,038, 12.8%, or \$2,084,376, above the \$16,243,662 given in February, and 17.5%, or \$2,729,960, above the \$15,598,078 received in March 2005, according to a news release from SBC Executive Committee President and Chief Executive Officer Morris H. Chapman. As of March 31, 2006, the year-to-date total of \$100,444,191 for Cooperative Program (CP) Missions is \$1,838,075, or 1.9%, above the \$98,606,116 received at the same point in 2005. Designated giving of \$114,901,353 for the same year-to-date period is 1.4%, or \$1,655,808, below gifts of \$116,557,161 received at this point last year. The \$35,167,038 in designated gifts received last month is \$8,388,597 above the \$26,778,441 received in March 2005, an increase of 31.3%. For the SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget, the year-to-date total of \$100,444,191 is 106% of the \$94,932,627 budgeted. The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention.





## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



**William H. Perkins Jr.**  
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# The annual Easter coincidence

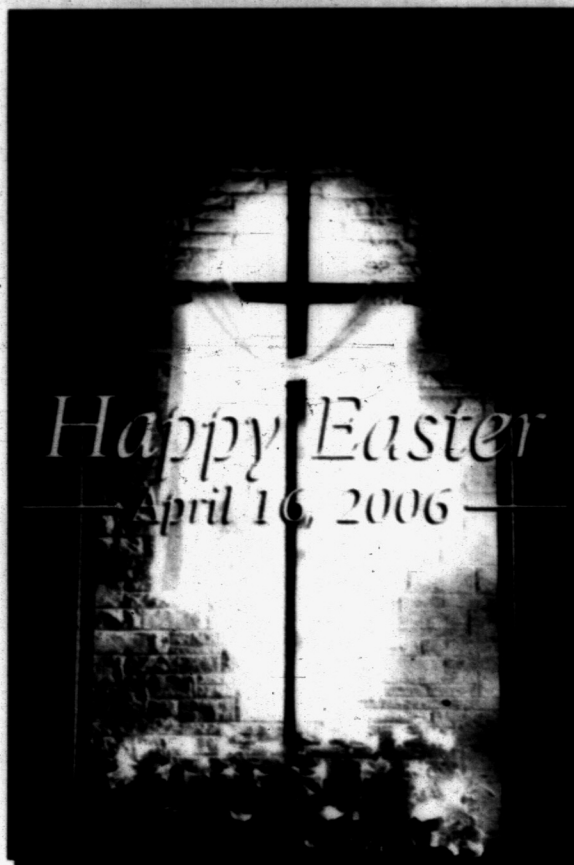
If the non-religious elitists in the mainstream American media are publishing articles calling into question everything Christians believe from the virgin birth of Jesus to His death and resurrection, it must be getting close to Easter. What a coincidence!

For several years now, outlets such as The New York Times, Newsweek magazine, the ABC television network, and any number of cable channels have earnestly published and broadcast pseudo-investigative reports around the time of Easter and Christmas with such profound headlines as, "Who was Jesus?" and "The Real Christ." Needless to say, the news media's answer to the question, "Who was Jesus?" and their description of "The Real Christ," are almost unrecognizable to Christians.

Underlying much of this reporting is a transparent effort to reduce the Son of God to a mere mortal, possibly misunderstood but certainly a troublemaker. Although couched in respectful terms (sort of), the conclusion is almost always the same: We just can't be sure that Jesus is who He said He was.

It gets tiring. Our faith truly is foolishness to unbelievers (1 Cor. 1:18). It wasn't too many years ago that the Washington Post described evangelical Christians as "poor, undereducated and easily led." Yes, they said that — and it's one of the nicer recent depictions of Christians in the mainstream media of this country.

The national media are currently in a frenzy over the Book of Judas, an ancient text that The New York Times describes as "deeply troubling for many believers," and as having produced "a new generation of Christians who now regard the Bible not as the literal word of God, but as a product of historical and political forces that determined which texts should be included in the canon, and which edited out."



National Geographic, whose cable channel will air a documentary on the Book of Judas at 8 p.m. CT on April 13, gushed, "One of the most significant biblical finds of the last century — a lost gospel that could challenge what is believed about the story of Judas and his betrayal of Jesus." Really.

To get everyone up to speed on the Book of Judas, here is a short primer courtesy of National Public Radio (excerpted):

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John make up the four accepted Gospels of the Christian New Testament. Now a new gospel has been unveiled by the National Geographic Society — one that focuses on the story of Judas Iscariot.

To most Christians, Judas is seen as a traitor, the disciple who betrayed Jesus to

the Romans for 30 pieces of silver. But a newly restored papyrus document dating to the 2nd century AD portrays a very different man. Judas is shown as Jesus' best friend, asked by Jesus himself to betray his identity to fulfill the prophecy and liberate his soul to ascend to heaven...

The leather-bound papyrus codex, believed to have been translated from the original ancient Greek to the Coptic language around 300 AD, was found in the 1970s in a cave in the desert near El Minya, Egypt. It then circulated among antiquities traders, moving from Egypt to Europe to the United States. The codex languished in a safe deposit box on Long Island, N.Y., for 16 years before being bought in 2000 by Zurich-based antiquities dealer Frieda Nussberger-Tchacos.

When attempts to resell the manuscript fell through, Tchacos — alarmed by the codex's rapidly deteriorating state — transferred it to the Maecenas Foundation for Ancient Art in Basel, Switzerland, in February 2001 for conservation and translation.

Rodolphe Kasser, one of the world's leading Coptic scholars, was recruited to reconstruct the manuscript and to transcribe and translate the text. The 66-page manuscript contains not only the Gospel of Judas but also a text titled James (also known as First Apocalypse of James), a letter of Peter to Philip and a fragment of a fourth text scholars for now are calling the Book of Allogenes.

That's it? That's all there is? This is what is supposed to turn 2000 years of Christianity on its head? How pathetically we are served by our news media.

The Bible is the authentic Word of God, Jesus Christ is the authentic Son of God, and we are the authentic followers of the authentic God and His authentic Son. Easter is a real event in human history, described in detail in the authentic Bible.

What's so hard to understand about that? Some people are simply educated beyond their intelligence. Unfortunately, that fact really stands out at this time of year.

When one of my sons responded recently to a grown woman with a "yeah," he received discipline from his father. It was a lesson passed down through the generations, because I received the same discipline. One responded to a grown man with a "Yes, sir" and to a grown woman with a "Yes, ma'am."

This may be chalked up to Southern culture, and indeed it is rooted in old patterns of Southern manners — but what if Southern sensibilities about terms of address were rooted in something older yet?

Steve Hutchens, my fellow editor at Touchstone magazine, has raised on the magazine's website the issue of manners and terms of address. He rightly contrasts the modern egalitarian ideal with a Christian view that goes far beyond manners.

"As Christians we are bound to give honor to those to whom honor is due, which includes the honor due everyone as made in the image of God (it is why we should both execute murderers and treat them humanely; it is why we treat unborn children as whole people), and then also of the 'office' he or she bears, beginning with

## GUEST OPINION:



## Yes, Sir ...

By Russell D. Moore  
Southern Seminary  
Louisville, Ky.

'Father' and 'Mother,' Hutchens writes. "This is why, I suspect, the various leveling movements in the history of the church have attracted only minorities, and have been very susceptible to heresy. Refusal to recognize the hierarchies placed in the world by its Maker, after his own image, is a recipe for not only theological but cultural disaster."

Terms of address can be overdone, of course. Jesus counsels against those who insist on elaborate recognitions in public places (Matt. 23:1-7). He insists we recognize that our ultimate "Father" and "Rabbi" (Matt. 23:8-11) is not human but divine in the same

way no one is anything but relatively good (Matt. 19:17). However, Jesus also recognized authority and even hierarchy in the choosing of the foundation stones of his temple: apostles whose authority was recognized by the church and is still recognized as we listen to the Spirit through the Holy Scriptures they were inspired to write.

The problem with teaching honor through terms of address comes down to the fact that many people believe the issue is personal. When I tell my boys to say hello to "Mr. Smith," Smith will often respond by saying, "Oh, it is fine for him to call me John." Well, no, it really

is not fine, because the issue is not what they call Smith.

The issue is instead that I want them to understand respect for elders and honor for authority. I want them to understand this, not so John Smith will feel honored or respected or anything else. I want them to do so for the same reason they call me "Dad" and not "Russell D." I want them to do so that ultimately they will understand and follow a Lord and a King.

Yes, I realize I'm probably a bit hyper-scrupulous about this, but I want to raise three young men who are able to look King Jesus in the eye, and then bow before Him on the Day of Judgment. I want them to understand the goodness of hierarchy when hierarchy is good. I want to see our Lord Christ ask them if they wish to enter into a new creation which is not an egalitarian democracy but a glorious monarchy.

I want to hear them say "Yes, sir."

Moore, a Biloxi native, is dean of the school of theology and senior vice president for academic administration at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.



# Israel elections heighten political tensions

**JERUSALEM (BP)** — Significant parts of the biblical Judea and Samaria, known today as the West Bank, may become the next focal point in Israeli-Palestinian volatility following Israel's parliamentary elections on March 28.

The Kadima party led by Ehud Olmert, Israel's acting prime minister and former mayor of Jerusalem, received enough votes to take the lead in forming a coalition government.

The new government, according to Olmert's statements during the campaign, will aim to secure Israel's borders and do so, if necessary, by a unilateral pullback from the West Bank that could remove 70,000 of the 250,000 Jewish settlers in the region.

"Just so much of Judea and Samaria are kind of on the auction block," lamented Rich Hastings, a Kansas City, Mo., healthcare executive and Baptist layman with strong ties to Israel.

The Kadima party, formed by then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon last November, garnered 28 seats in Israel's Knesset in the March 28 voting, fewer than had been projected. The popular Israeli leader suffered a debilitating stroke on Jan. 4 and has since been in a coma, leaving the government and Kadima (which means "forward") largely in Olmert's hands.

Olmert on March 29 praised Sharon for having had "the courage, the strength, the will, and the determination to see things differently and to create change." The new prime minister noted, "In the coming period, we will move to set the final borders

of the state of Israel" preferably "through negotiations, in an agreement with the Palestinians."

Olmert directed a message to Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas, who himself is in a tenuous position following the terror-prone Hamas movement's claim to 76 of the 132 seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council in Jan. 25 elections.

Olmert said Israel is "prepared to compromise, give up parts of our beloved land of Israel [and] remove, painfully, Jews who live there, to allow you the conditions to achieve your hopes and to live in a state in peace and quiet."

Palestinians should find "the required strength for the same compromise," Olmert said, urging them "to accept only part of their dream, to stop terror, to accept democracy and accept compromise and peace with us. We are prepared for this. We want this."

Olmert declared that, "If the Palestinians agree to act soon, we will sit at the negotiating table to create a new reality in our region. If they do not, Israel will take its fate into its own hands... We will not wait forever."

Hamas' leader Ismail Haniya, however, said in a speech that the Palestinians will carry on in their armed fight for independence. "We were born from the womb of resistance, we will protect resistance and the arm of resistance will not be touched," he was quoted as saying.

Hastings, president of St. Luke's Health System in Kansas City and a member of First Baptist Church in Raytown, described Olmert as a man of



**SPECIAL PLACE** — In Jerusalem, the golden-colored Dome of the Rock, an icon of Islam, rests just above the Western Wall that is venerated by the Jewish faith. With the crucifixion of Jesus Christ also occurring in Jerusalem, the ancient city and areas like the West Bank continue to be reflections of the conflicts among the three major world religions. (BP photo)

integrity and one with whom Hastings has prayed. "He was completely accepting of the fact that we were praying in the name of Jesus," said Hastings, who has been involved in various trade missions to Israel and has also led a yearly tour group to the Holy Land. Hastings also was the chairman of the 2004 Billy Graham crusade in Kansas City.

"What I am disappointed in is the plan to divide up or give away parts of the Holy Land — parts of the Promised Land because, after all, the land was promised to the Jewish people, the Israeli people."

Hastings described himself as "a strict Bible-believer" from the standpoint that "all through Genesis and, actually, all the way through the Old Testament, there is time and time again [God's declaration] that the land has been promised

# Record

to Israel and at no place do we find any Scripture, that I'm aware of, that indicates that that promise was taken away." That includes the Gaza Strip, he said, where Sharon forced nearly 9,000 settlers from their communities last year.

Noting that Olmert has indicated the new pullback process may take a year, Hastings said he will be praying that political events and "other events that the Lord may impact" will stir Olmert to understand "that this is not a good idea."

## DOMA debated

**PASADENA, Calif. (BP)** — In a case that could result in the nationwide legalization of homosexual marriage, a lawyer representing a homosexual couple asked a federal appeals court panel April 4 to strike down the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Signed into law in 1996, DOMA prevents the federal government from recognizing homosexual marriage and gives states the option of doing the same — but the two men, who reside in California, argue that the law violates the U.S. Constitution. They lost last year at the district court level and appealed. It was the first time that any appeals court considered the constitutionality of DOMA. Two district court judges, as well as a bankruptcy court, have ruled it constitutional. The couple actually is challenging two laws, the federal DOMA and California's law that protects the natural definition of marriage. The fact that the men had registered as domestic partners, and then terminated that partnership, may have hurt their cause legally. They ended their partnership as a way of protesting California's marriage laws, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. By doing that, they may have lost legal standing to sue. The major homosexual and liberal groups including Lambda Legal and the American Civil Liberties Union oppose the lawsuit, arguing the timing is bad and that it could lead to bad precedent at the U.S. Supreme Court. Such a federal case, they argue, should wait until more states have legalized homosexual marriage. "We have been very active in trying to win the freedom to marry for same-sex couples," Jon Davidson, an attorney for Lambda Legal, told AP. "We think there is a smart way to do that and a less smart way to do that." After the panel issues a ruling, the case could be appealed either to the full Ninth Circuit, or to the U.S. Supreme Court. The case is *Smelt v. Orange County*.

## Looking back

10 years ago

James Fancher, age 67, of Florence announces his retirement from the position of consultant for the Evangelism Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

20 years ago

Crestwood Cottage is dedicated at the Mississippi Baptist Children's Village in honor of the disbanded Jackson congregation that served as the Village's home church for 41 years and donated all its remaining funds to the Village after closing.

60 years ago

The forerunner of the Baptist Children's Village, the Orphanage, puts out a plea for fresh spring eggs. "The Orphanage can use 24 dozen in a day easily, or a case which is 30 dozen," according to Mrs. W. G. Mize.



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**BAPTISTS**

**THE SECOND  
FRONT PAGE**

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## OPPORTUNITIES

Easter is a great time to think about opportunities. I suppose more importantly it is a time to look at missed opportunities. The entire Easter event unfolds and moves towards the glorious, triumphant resurrection of Jesus, but it is also surrounded by great missed opportunities. While the disciples watched a lady come in with an alabaster box of precious ointment and anoint Jesus, they did nothing. Then after His death and burial a group of the ladies, who were followers of Jesus, realized that they needed to go to the tomb with spices and ointment to anoint His body. As you will certainly remember, when they got there that day they were a day late for anointing, but they were blessed to hear that He was alive.

I think about the disciples of Jesus who were privileged to come to a place of prayer with Him only hours before His march to the cross. They went with Jesus but were not really there. While He was agonizing in prayer, they drifted off to sleep. He came, awoke them, and wondered why they could not be alert for just a little while. Then they drifted off again. They slept at the most crucial moment leading up to the end of His ministry on earth — missed opportunities.

Of course, there is that sad thief on the cross who was so wrapped up in his own bitterness that he could not see the Son of God hanging alongside of him. While one thief trusted the Lord, the other could only

lash out at Him. While he was taking his last breath, he died with the door to heaven next to him but refused to enter in — missed opportunities.

All of us live with opportunities that come to us, and we are faced with what to do with them. So often the response is to do nothing, and we miss the opportunities. Many churches fall into a quagmire of do nothing-ism and spend empty years with a long trail of missed opportunities. Sadly, some churches never seem to miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity.

Think about your opportunities. Opportunities do not come every day, and they do not always stay until tomorrow. As with the above-mentioned Easter opportunities, they were once-in-a-lifetime events. Often opportunities come and there is a small window of time, and unless we act the window is closed. Ephesians 5:16 says, "Redeeming the times for the days are evil." When opportunities come for us to do a work for God, to accomplish a task, to reach a soul, and to make a difference, we must capture that moment, or it will be gone and possibly never return.

# Directions

**Jim Futral**, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board



Sometimes an entire church congregation is like the sleepy, groggy disciples. The opportunities come and go and we miss them. The fellow was right who said, "You only have one opportunity to make a good first impression." Virtually every Sunday in most of our churches people will come into our congregations needing a touch from God and needing the warmth of a fellowship, and frequently it is a one-time shot. You miss it and you miss a ministry opportunity and potentially a soul being saved.

Leadership can miss opportunities and sometimes the fellowship can miss them. There are times when opportunities present themselves where someone needs to step forward and say, "Let's do this!" When a leader does not see or sees but does not act, an opportunity can be missed and the rest of the people are never aware that something could have been done. Equally as important is the fact that if the leader says, "This is the time. Let's do it! This is the way. Let's act!" if the fellowship says, "No or let's wait, and wait, and wait," the opportunities can be lost and gone forever. It puts the burden of responsibility and requirement of sensitivity upon

all of us that when given an opportunity we lead and when given an opportunity we willingly and encouragingly follow.

Another thought is that making the most of opportunities may take most of the time you have, much of the resources you possess, and much of the energy you can muster. When Paul challenges us to redeem the times, he is telling us that we must give the best we have to make a difference. Things do not just happen! Opportunities are not just captured. Redemption always involves concern, commitment, and some type of payment. Think about someone getting a college education. College is different from the school days through high school graduation. It is different because if you are going to do it you have to want to do it. It is different because somebody is going to have to come up with some money in order for it to happen. In one sense getting a college education is redeeming the time. It is taking a period of time, investing your mind, your time, and your resources, and then transforming that time into an educational experience. It is no easy task.

The person or the church looking for the easy way to make a difference in this world does not need to look at God-given opportunities. They will require a lot, maybe everything, in order to change the world. A study of the opportunities or missed opportunities in the Easter account reminds us it can cost everything.

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### YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

## SANCTUARY

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# Pair of missionaries with special stories pass away

Richmond, Va. (BP) — Fern Harrington Miles, a Southern Baptist missionary who was a prisoner of war during World War II, died March 31 in San Angelo, Texas. She was 91 years of age.

In 1940, the then-Fern Harrington was appointed as a missionary to China by the Foreign Mission Board (now the International Mission Board) of the Southern Baptist Convention. Her ability to speak Chinese quickly earned her the respect of Chinese, but her work was cut short by World War II. After just one year on the field, she was evacuated from China.

She relocated to the Philippines but later was captured there by the Japanese military and held as a prisoner of war. She was freed by American forces in 1945.

Harrington was able to return to China in 1947, only to be forced out a year later by the communist revolution. She again turned her efforts to ministering to Chinese refugees in the Philippines, helping plant three churches.

She spent the remaining time of her missionary career teaching at a Baptist seminary in Taiwan, retiring from the mission board in 1975 after 35 years of service and returning to the United States.

Born in Atlanta, Mo., Harrington accepted Jesus Christ as her Savior at the age of 13 but did not feel God's call to missions until her senior year in college. After graduation, she attended Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, earning her master's degree in religious education.

Single until 1976, Fern married retired Carson-Newman College professor Herbert J. Miles. Together, the couple authored four books including, *Captive Community*, detailing Fern's experiences as a Japanese prisoner of war. Herbert Miles died of cancer in 1994.

The eldest of five siblings, Fern Harrington Miles is survived by three brothers and one sister.

• Excerpt from a letter written by Fern Harrington (Miles) during her internment at a Japanese prison camp in the Philippines, dated Aug. 21, 1943:

"After 20 months without writing, I find it rather difficult to know what to say and how to say it in one short page...

"I keep busy so time passes quickly. My camp duty consists of three hours daily in preparation of special food for the babies — now toddling youngsters from one year to 18 months. I cook the vegetables and puree them as well as fruit, sterilize dishes and bottles and pasteurize the milk, etc."

"Even though out of contact all these months, through prayer we have not been far apart. Those of us here have been conscious of many remembering us and prayed in turn that you might have the assurance in your hearts of our well being."

• Excerpt from a letter Harrington sent to Foreign Mission Board Executive Secretary M.T. Rankin shortly after she was freed in the Philippines by American forces, dated March 22, 1945:

"Let me say first of all that I have never held you responsible for what happened as a result of our coming to the Philippines, nor have I ever even in moments of deepest despair once doubted the fact that God led me to China when I came ... What little inconvenience or suffering we have had to endure seems so trivial when compared with the suffering of the rest of the world that I feel embarrassed even to mention it. I find that the unpleasantness of our experience is fast fading from our memory as we become more and more aware of how every need was adequately met

through God's loving care. Miracles no longer seem a mystery to me...

"We have learned much which I hope will make us more useful on the mission field ... to make use of every opportunity for Christian witnessing even though your life doesn't seem to be following the course you'd planned."

Davis Saunders, a pioneer in Southern Baptist missions work in East Africa and retired regional vice president for Africa at the International Mission Board, died April 2. He was 80 years of age.

For nearly 40 years, Saunders dedicated his passion for overseas missions to Africa, both on and off the mission field. During that time, Southern Baptist work grew from 152 missionaries in three African countries to nearly 1,000 missionaries in 33 countries.

Since Saunders retired in 1990, the number has gradually increased to around 1,200 throughout Africa and the North Africa and Middle East regions.

John Mills, a longtime friend and colleague, described Saunders as a dedicated, hard-working man with a dry wit; a knack for speaking Swahili and making friends; and a heart for spreading the Gospel throughout Africa.

"He was a very hands-on fellow who pushed hard; he wanted to see things happen," Mills said. "It was that kind of dedication to the work that he got done."

Saunders and Mills first met in 1951 on an ocean freighter sailing for Nigeria. Saunders and his wife Mary had just been appointed as missionaries, and the Millses were returning to the mission field for their second term. During eight weeks of traveling — including an unexpected detour to Angola — Mills shared nearly everything he knew about Africa with Saunders. In that time, the two became close friends.

"It was an awful trip; we had a substitute captain and a dirty ship," Mills recalled. "[But] those eight weeks really cemented our friendship for life."

During the next 22 years, the Saunderses were missionaries in three countries: Nigeria, Kenya, and Tanzania. In 1956, they were one of three couples to pioneer Southern Baptist work in East Africa by becoming the first to move to Kenya.

They started an outreach center in Nairobi and became charter members of one of the first Baptist churches organized in the country. In 1964, the couple transferred to Tanzania where Saunders became principal of the Baptist Theological Seminary.

By the late 1960s, the work throughout Africa mushroomed, and Saunders became the mission board's first field representative for the board's Eastern and Southern Africa administrative region. In that position, he worked with all of the missionaries in that part of the continent.

In 1973, Saunders moved off the field and became area director for the board's Eastern and Southern Africa region. Mills soon joined him in

Richmond as area director of West Africa. In the years that followed, the two developed a tight partnership, while facilitating missions growth throughout Africa.

"I almost wore a path from my office to his," Mills said. "If I was his orientation director to mission service, he was mine as area director... It was that kind of relationship across those years."

In 1987, Saunders became regional vice president for Africa and served in that position until he retired three years later. After retiring, Saunders served several South Carolina churches as an interim pastor and taught classes at Charleston Southern University in Charleston, S.C.



Harrington Miles



Saunders

## Students planning second 'Day of Truth' observance

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — For the second year in a row, students across the nation this spring will join together to oppose the promotion of homosexuality in schools and to stand up for biblical values.

The second annual Day of Truth, sponsored by the Christian legal group Alliance Defense Fund (ADF), will take place April 27 — the day after the Day of Silence, which is sponsored by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network.

While the Day of Silence requires teens to remain silent to promote the homosexual agenda and protest what organizers perceive as "anti-gay" discrimination, the Day of Truth simply asks junior high, high school, and college students to wear a T-shirt and to pass out cards which say, in part, "I am speaking the Truth to break the silence." The cards are passed out outside of class time.

"What [the Day of Truth] does is it provides an opportunity to participating students to express a different perspective from the Day of Silence," ADF attorney Delia Van Loenen told Baptist Press. "The reason that's so important is because students can't be expected to make good decisions if they're only being told part of the story — if they're only getting information from the Day of Silence."

The first Day of Truth saw students from 350 schools participate, and ADF organizers hope to have twice that number this year. By comparison, the Day of Silence — which started at the University of Virginia — had students from less than 100 colleges and high schools participate in the first year it went national, and didn't pass the 300 mark until its third year.

Much to the consternation of Christian conservatives, the Day of Silence has grown and supporters expect students from some 4,000 schools to take part this year. It has received the backing of a few politicians along the way, including former California Gov. Gray Davis, who issued a proclamation naming April 10, 2002, the National Day of Silence. In some schools, the Day of Silence has had the support of teachers and administration.

A student in California helped inspire the creation of the Day of Truth. In 2004

Chase Harper, a San Diego-area high school student, protested his school's participation in the Day of Silence by wearing a homemade T-shirt that read on the front, "Be Ashamed" and "Our School Embraced What God Has Condemned," and on the back read, "Homosexuality is Shameful" and "Romans 1:27."

He was suspended, and the Alliance Defense Fund filed a lawsuit on his behalf. ADF said school administrations participated in the Day of Silence, putting pressure on students to do the same.

"If they know that there is an option ... and they see our love and see that there is a choice, that's the only way that they're going to be set free," Harper says on a Day of Truth video about teens struggling with homosexuality.

All Day of Truth resources are designed to fall within constitutional limits. The T-shirts have a "Day of Truth" logo on the front and say "The Truth cannot be silenced" on the back. The cards, which are designed to be given to friends, say, "I am speaking the Truth to break the silence. Silence isn't freedom. It's a constraint. Truth tolerates open discussion, because the Truth emerges when healthy discourse is allowed. By proclaiming the Truth in love, hurts will be halted, hearts will be healed, and lives will be saved."

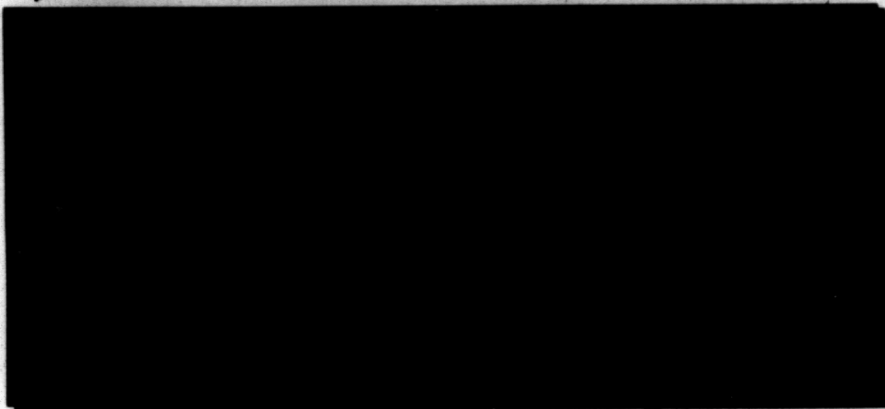
Said Van Loenen, "Our truth is based on Christian love, and that's the message that is promoted with the Day of Truth. Unfortunately, a lot of Day of Silence supporters forget the fact that the First Amendment protects these students' right not only to have that perspective but to share that perspective ...

"They claim to be about tolerance, but what they're really about is intolerance to opposing viewpoints," Van Loenen added. "The Day of Truth is all about tolerance for that opposing viewpoint. All we're trying to do is promote an honest and open and respectful discussion between students."

Day of Truth kits, which cost \$10, include a T-shirt, a stack of 25 cards and a DVD. Financial assistance is available for those who need it. The kits can be ordered online at [www.DayOfTruth.org](http://www.DayOfTruth.org) or by calling (800) Tell-ADF.



## JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Sunday School Growth Plan, Corinth Church, Jasper Assoc.



2. Sanctity of Life Sunday, Springfield Church, Morton



3. Stoker Ordained, First Church, Taylorsville



4. Annual Senior Banquet, Lake Como Church, Bay Springs



5. Children Bible Drillers, Fredonia Church, New Albany

1. Corinth Church, Jasper Association, recognized participants in their Sunday School Growth Plan during their commitment service Jan. 8. Bill Riley, pastor; Harry Walters, S.S. director.

2. Springfield Church, Morton, participated in the Sanctity of Life Sunday. Shown, from left, are deacons Carl Woolery, Phillip Woolery, Gary Stegall, Homer Willingham, and Kendell Winstead, with the church's cross display.

3. First Church, Taylorsville, recently ordained their minister of students, Jason Stoker, to the gospel ministry. Shown are Dan Caldwell, Mark Farris, Shannon Stoker, Stoker, and pastor Frankie Clark.

4. Lake Como Church, Bay Springs, held its annual senior banquet, with the meal provided and served by the youth of the church. Shown are some of the participants.

5. Fredonia Church, New Albany, recognizes their children's Bible drillers. From left: Cason Robbins, Cody Roberson, Billy Eaker, Anna Clar Wooley, Bailey Thompson, and Gavin Aldridge.

6. First Church; Itta Bena, recently sponsored a clothing ministry at Scott Fish Farm. Shown are some of the participants.

7. Edon Church, Stringer, recently ordained youth minister/interim pastor Matt Flynt. Shown are Stacy Graham, Ed Buckley, guest pastor Alan Woodward, and Flynt.

8. Center Terrace Church, Canton, recently ordained Charles Chisholm as deacon. Shown are Chisholm, Liz Chisholm, and pastor Danny Berry.

9. Several students at First Church, Richton, made a public commitment to seek God's will concerning relationships and to remain pure until marriage during a True Love Waits campaign. Shown are some of the participants.

10. Mount Vernon Church, Newton County, recently licensed Roger Estes to the music ministry. He is available for revivals, concerts, and other services. He can be reached at (601) 727-5821 or (615) 429-7372. Shown are pastor Steve Pouncey and Estes.



6. Clothing Ministry, First Church, Itta Bena



7. Flynt Ordination, Edon Church, Stringer



8. Deacon Ordination, Center Terrace Church, Canton



9. True Love Waits, First Church, Richton



10. Pouncey and Ellis, Mount Vernon Church, Newton County



## STATE CHANGES

Calvary Church, Columbus, has called Stacey Blake as pastor. He previously served Fairview Church, Indianola. He and his wife Jane are Columbus natives and have three children: Ashley, Patrick, and Garrett.

Emmanuel Church, Greenville, has called Richard Young as pastor. He comes with his wife Amy and sons Richard Jr. and Jordan. He previously served Cypress Church, Benton, La.

West Ripley Church, Ripley, has called Matt Tyler as minister of music. He and his wife Summer come from First Church, Guntown.



Young

Ed McDaniel is retiring from North Winona Church, Winona. He will be available for supply/interim preaching.



Tyler

Parkway Church, Pascagoula, has called Jim Stanhope as pastor. He and his wife Karen come from the Hixon, Tenn., area. The family has five children.

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## OBITUARIES

Dewey Wayne Moore, 65, died Feb. 15 at his home in Neshoba County. He was serving as pastor of New Harmony Church, Philadelphia. Services were at McClain-Hayes funeral home, with burial in Cedarlawn Cemetery. Valton Douglas, Kenna Byrd, and Steve Moore officiated. Moore, a native of Leake County, had served 34 years in Southern Baptist churches throughout Mississippi. He worked in the machinist/mechanical fields for 24 years with Litton Industries, Kerr-McGee and Siapam Oil. Survivors include his wife Beverly Moore of Philadelphia, one daughter, four sons, 11 grandchildren, one great-grandchild, one sister, and one brother.

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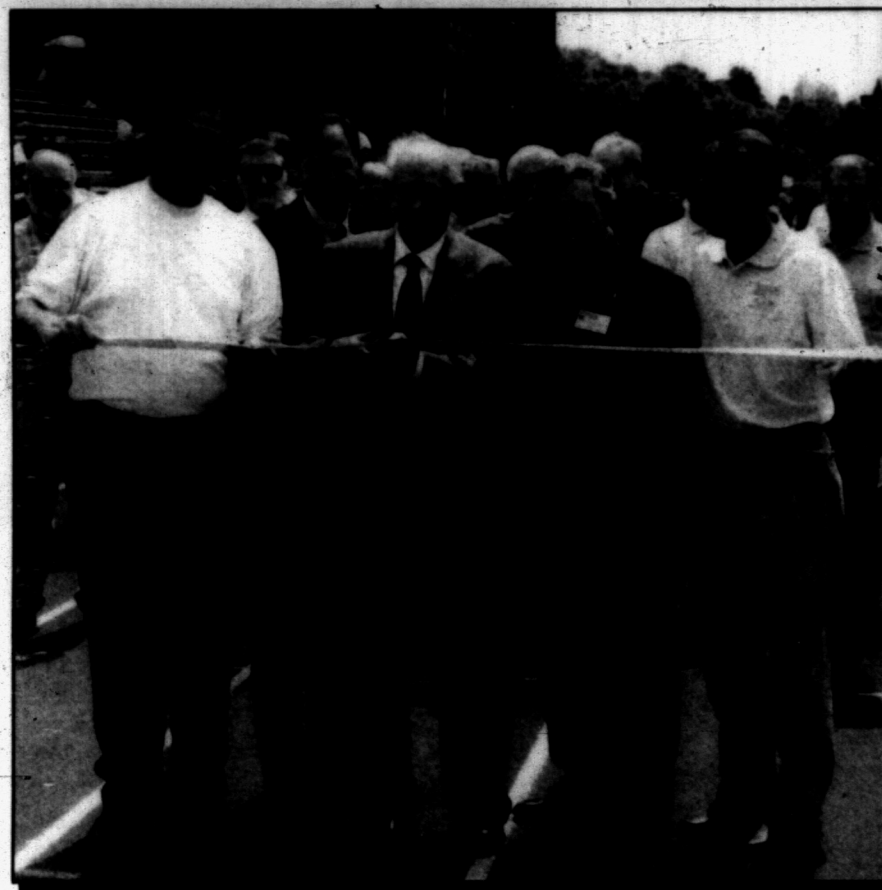
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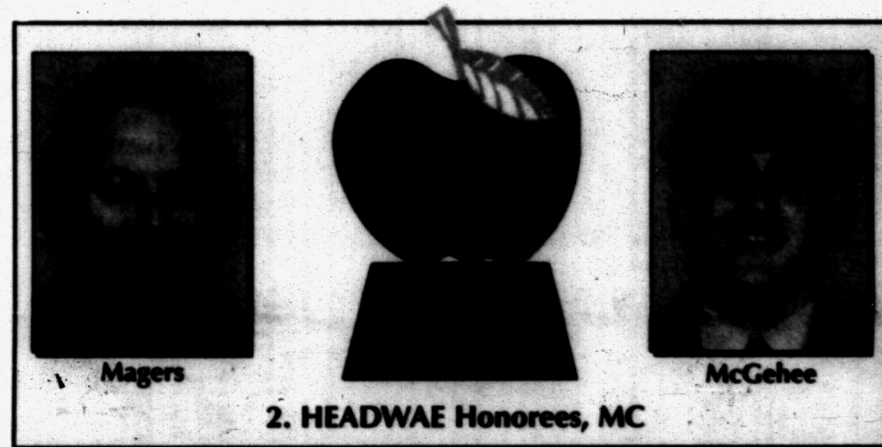
## COLLEGE NEWS

1. The new track facility at Mississippi College was officially dedicated on April 7 before a crowd of more than 1,000. It was the first track meet hosted by MC in more than two decades. The track was made possible by the lead gifts of James E. Parkman, Jr., graduate of MC in 1972, in honor of his father, James E. Parkman, Sr., graduate of MC in 1948, longtime Clinton resident and Mississippi educator; Robert Watson, of Watson Ford, Inc., Jackson, MS.; and Charles Evans, Attorney at Law, graduate of MC in 1975. Former Mississippi College athletes also contributed to the track.



1. MC Track Dedication

2. Mississippi College has announced the recipients of this year's Higher Education Appreciation Day — Working for Academic Excellence award (HEADWAE). Faculty honoree David Magers (Clinton) and student Wes McGehee of (Brookhaven) both received special recognition from the Mississippi Legislature during the 19th Annual HEADWAE program on Feb. 28. Shown are Magers and McGehee.



2. HEADWAE Honorees, MC

3. Ten William Carey College students and Daniel Browning, professor of religion, recently visited Israel as part of a Travel in Biblical Lands class offered at Carey. The eleven day trip included tours of Bethlehem and Jerusalem, the original City of David, the Mount of Olives, Nazareth and the Dead Sea.

4. Read Diket, professor of art and education at William Carey College, was named a Distinguished Fellow by the National Art Education Association (NAEA) recently. This award recognizes recipients for exem-

plary service and distinguished contributions to the association and the profession and enduring dedication to the advancement of art education.

5. The William Carey College Chorale will perform in concert Mozart's Requiem Apr. 2, 3 p.m., at Main Street Church, Hattiesburg. The concert is free.

6. The William Carey College Fellowship of Christian Athletes will host a 5K Run/Walk May 6 at 7:30 a.m. on the Hattiesburg campus. For more information or to receive an application for the race, please call Jancsi Ward at (601) 318-6575, Brandon Roney at (601) 318-6339 or the Student Activities Office at (601) 318-6444.

## REVIVALS & HOMECOMINGS

First Church, Batesville: Evangelist Jim McNiel, The Walking Bible, Apr. 12 - 16; Wed. - Sat., 7 p.m.; Sun., 8:15 and 10:45 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Tuscola Church, Leake Association: Revival, Apr. 23 - 26; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m., with covered dish lunch; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; John Sharp, speaker; Mike Donovan, music; Smith Sanders, pastor.

Stringer Church, Stringer: 100th Anniversary, Apr. 30; worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch, special music, afternoon service with history of the church and guest speakers. Buddy Jennings, speaker.

Ecu Church, Ecu: Revival, Apr. 30 - May 3; Sun., 6:30 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Randy Isbell, speaker; Billy Joe Kennedy, music.

Calvary Church, Louisville: Memorial Sunday, Apr. 30; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 10:45 a.m.; covered dish lunch, noon. Kent Cochran, Brookhaven, speaker; Jerry Nance, music; Charles Moody, pastor.



## Bibliocipher

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TROWPCWO TO  
WOJOSLSBQ H YSBQNC  
TRSJR JHBBM IO ACLON,  
ZOM KD RHLO QWHJO,  
TROWOIE TO AHE  
DOWLO QCN  
HIJJOUMHIZE TSMR  
WOLOWOBJO HBN  
QCNZE POHW.

RQIWOTD MTOZLO:

MTOBME-OSQRM

Clue: W = R

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Romans Five: One.



11. Harrison and Williams, Prentiss Church, Prentiss

11. June Harrison, organist, and Tricia Williams, pianist, recently presented a concert celebrating 25 years of playing together at Prentiss Church, Prentiss. Shown are Harrison and Williams.

12. Several youth from Water Oak Church, Wayne County, participated in youth week. Shown, front row, from left: Madison Trigg, Makayla Newell, Fallon Blackwell, Randilyn Trigg, Devin Farrior, Blake Trigg, and Eric Blackwell; rear, from left: Kurt Kittrell, Joshua Hollingshead, and Blane Blackwell.

13. Three generations ordained by and serve at McLaurin Heights Church, Pearl. From left: Don Bailey, Jr., Matthew Bailey, and Don Bailey, Sr.

14. The combined choirs of Damascus, Flora, and Ogden, Bentonina will present A Hill Too Far Away by Camp Kirkland Apr. 15, 7 p.m. at Damascus Church, Flora, with a reception following the performance.

15. Pine Grove Church, Coffeerville, is hosting a spring fling Apr. 15, 6 p.m., with singing featuring the Kilgore Sisters from Holcomb and Homeward Bound from Coffeerville, with food and fellowship following.

16. Hebron Church, Clay County, will host a women's conference Apr. 22, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Iris Blue, speaker; Sacred Heart and Patsy Lawson, music; catered meal. Love offering



12. Youth Week, Water Oak Church, Wayne County

received. For more information, call (662) 494-7513 or 494-2377.

17. Leaf River Church, Smith County, will share their Easter cantata Apr. 16, 7 a.m., with potluck breakfast following.

18. Highland Church, Laurel, is hosting a Celebrate the Vision weekend May 5-7. Guest speakers include Len Turner, James Merritt, evangelist Jerry Chaddick, and music by Alicia Williamson Garcia. For more information, call

(601) 428-8493 or visit [www.highlandchurch.net](http://www.highlandchurch.net).

19. Union Church (South), Seminary, will honor John Gandy for 50 years as deacon May 7 during the 10 a.m. service, with fellowship following.

20. Several girls from North Morton Church, Morton, attended GA Day Jan. 28. Girls attending included Twyla Parker, Katy Yount, Sandy Barrett, Sheree Smith, Lauren Sanders, Destiny Randall, Kristen Rohmann, and Kasey Gray.



13. Three Generations Ordained, McLaurin Heights Church, Pearl

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**THE GEORGE/GREEN AREA MISSIONS PROGRAM** is now receiving resumes for the position of associational missions director. Please send to George/Greene area missions, P.O. Box 93, Lucedale, MS 39452. Resumes will be received through June 1, 2006.

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**TWIN LAKES BAPTIST CHURCH IN MADISON** seeking a part-time minister of Students. Send resumes to Hugh Smith, 673 Lake Cavalier Rd., Madison, MS 39110 or call (601) 856-2305.



# Commission: U.S. should turn up heat on Sudan gov't

WASHINGTON (BP) — The United States must continue to exert its influence in Sudan if a just peace is to be achieved in the strife-torn African country, a bipartisan government panel and members of both political parties have stated.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) offered its assessment in a new report on the progress achieved a year after a peace agreement was signed at the close of a two-decade-old civil war based largely on religion. Peace has not been implemented in some areas of Sudan, and religious liberty and other human rights have not been protected consistently, the commission reported.

The January 2005 signing of a peace treaty brought an end to a war marked by what has been described as a genocidal campaign by the militant Islamic, Arab regime in Khartoum against Christians and animists in southern Sudan and moderate African Muslims. More than two million people died and about 4 million were displaced during the conflict.

The peace in Sudan is "very fragile," USCIRF Chairman Michael Cromartie said March 29 in releasing the report at a news conference in the U.S. Capitol. "Sustained, close engagement by the United States is necessary" if peace is to be established, he said.

Republican Rep. Frank Wolf of Virginia offered an even stronger call for U.S. action.

"[W]e have to go back and do something bolder," Wolf said. He commended the Bush administration for its work but said the situation needs to be "treated with more passion." The U.S. should be "very aggressive" in working for peace in Sudan, Wolf said.

To that end, Wolf called for President Bush to appoint a special envoy to Sudan. He had a recommendation for the slot, one affirmed at the news conference by House of Representatives Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi: Former Democratic Congressman Tony Hall, who was appointed in 2002 by Bush as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture.

The USCIRF called for the Bush administration to make appointments to two positions among a series of recommendations in its report. The panel urged the assignment of an official to the U.S. embassy in Khartoum to promote human rights during implementation of the peace agreement and the selection of a "special representative" to aid refugees and internally displaced people in returning to their homes.

The commission's other recommendations to the U.S. government included:

- The continued designation of Sudan as a "country of particular concern" for especially severe violations of religious liberty.
- A public report every six

months on the status of progress in enforcing the peace agreement.

- The maintenance of existing sanctions against Sudan, with exceptions for such matters as development efforts in the south and educational exchanges with the U.S.

- An assurance foreign aid is promoting the provisions on religious freedom and other human rights in the peace agreement.

- The use of diplomacy with Sudan to urge the protection of religious liberty and the prosecution of slavery and human trafficking.

Pelosi, a Democrat from California, said at the news conference, "The United States must make religious freedom an important part of foreign policy. [We] must shine the bright light of freedom on all" cases of religious persecution, she said.

Rep. Donald Payne, D-N.J., said at the news conference the stakes stretch beyond Sudan. "The whole region is going to be at risk if this continues," he said.

The USCIRF found the conditions for religious freedom have improved in the south but reported there were no such significant improvements in the north, where strict Islamic law remains in force and there still are no permits for construction of new church buildings.

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, is a USCIRF commissioner.



**SEEKING REFUGE** — The looming crisis in Sudan's Darfur province is evident in neighboring Chad where thousands of refugees have fled to escape marauding Arab militias. Christians are especially threatened, with many thousands executed, bombed, or sold into slavery around the Arab world. (BP photo courtesy of Eskinder Debebe/United Nations)

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For more information about the Mississippi Baptist Foundation Scholarship Ministry, please contact our office at Post Office Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205, telephone us at (601) 252-3210, or (800) 748-1651, or visit our website, [www.mbf.org/agencies/smbf](http://www.mbf.org/agencies/smbf). A completed application must be received in the MBF office by April 30.

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**3**  
NEW TWIN  
COMFORTERS  
for Elementary  
boys cottage

**9**  
NEW TWIN  
COMFORTERS  
(3 sets of 3)  
for Middle School  
boys cottage

NEW CURTAINS  
for Middle School  
boys bedrooms



The ladies of the Jo Jones Sunday School Class of Morrison Heights Baptist Church recently donated new bed linens and other items for Quarles Cottage. The cottage houses girls 12 years old and under. (Photo courtesy of Baptist Children's Village)

For your convenience, memorial and honor donations can now be made online at [www.baptistchildrensvillage.com](http://www.baptistchildrensvillage.com)



## FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

### You Have a Risen Lord

Luke 24: 5b-8, 36-48

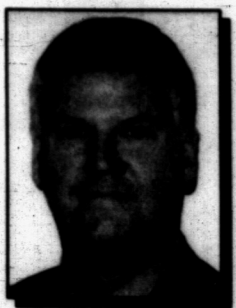
By Huey Dedmon

It seems that all we hear by way of news these days is bad news. There is an old saying that goes like this, "good news travels fast." The revised, post-modern version should read, "All news, good or bad, travels fast." The only problem is there just seems to be more bad news than good news. People are living with many kinds of problems: the fear of future events, loss of loved ones, doubts about their salvation, worries about personal health, and financial insecurity are just a few. I think it is time for some good news and I believe it is up to the modern-day church of Jesus to spread that news. The good news is that Jesus is alive!

The grave could not hold him! Our study for today comes from Luke 24:5b-8 and 36-48.

The past few weeks we have been following Jesus as He made His way to the cross. Everything He has done has been completed in obedience to the Father with the purpose of glorifying Him. Now we will see that God will bring glory to Himself through the resurrection of His Son.

Very early on the third day some women came to the tomb of Jesus (v. 1-5). As they approached the tomb, the women saw the stone covering the entrance was rolled away. They could not believe what they were seeing! Suddenly two men stood with them and



Dedmon

asked, "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" (HCSB) "He is not here, but He has been resurrected!" (HCSB, v. 6a) There it is — the "Good News." Jesus is alive! He has risen from the dead!

Everything He ever taught and every promise He ever made is solidified in the truth of His resurrection. His resurrection proves that Jesus is who He said He is. This is where we get all the authority we need to share the Good News of Jesus with a lost and troubled world. One thing I have learned about sharing Jesus is that it is impossible to share Jesus effectively unless we know Him personally. The truth is Jesus has risen from the grave, and in that truth lies the strength of the Gospel. There is no Good News without the resurrection of Jesus.

In verses 9-35 we have the account of the response to the

empty tomb. The women ran and told the others what they had seen and heard. Their story was met with much disbelief. Peter ran to the tomb and found only the grave clothes of Jesus in the tomb. Peter went home amazed at what he had witnessed. The other believers also began to scatter. Two of them met Jesus on their way to Emmaus. They spent all day walking with Jesus, but only recognized Him after He broke bread with them. They also went to the apostles and described to them their encounter with the risen Lord. Just as they were finishing their account, Jesus stood among the entire group (v. 36). His greeting to them was, "Peace to you" (HCSB). The Good News of Jesus offers anyone who believes the peace of God in their lives. Trouble, doubt, and fear in our life can be overcome by the Good News that Jesus offers us peace. The disciples were confused and discouraged by the death of Jesus, but

the physical presence of Jesus that day brought new hope and zeal to their lives. Does the truth of the resurrection bring new hope and zeal to your life? It should, because this is a story that has never changed, and it never will change. The story of Jesus is the same today as it was 2,000 years ago.

Another part of the resurrection that gives a solid foundation to the Good News of Jesus' love for the people of world is found in the fulfillment of Scripture. Jesus told His followers that all that He had been through happened in order to fulfill facts that had been foretold about Him in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms (v. 44). Jesus opened their mind to the truth of the Scriptures. Through His suffering, salvation was provided for all who believe. Are you sharing the Good News? He is Risen, Hallelujah what a Savior!

*Dedmon is minister of education at First Church, Grenada.*

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Do You Share the Good News?

Matthew 28:1-10, 16-20

By Lori Clendinning

Others may choose Christmas, Valentine's Day, Thanksgiving, or even the Fourth of July, but truly, no other holiday means as much to me as Easter and especially that of Easter morning. As a child I experienced the heady excitement of waking before dawn and putting on my new Easter dress to attend my rural church's Easter Sunrise service. Even decades later, I can still recall the damp, freshly cut grass clinging to my brand-new white patent leather shoes and the utter stillness as we crunched our way from the gravel drive to the outdoor service on the church lawn. How I thrilled to hear the triumphant, deep-from-the-toes singing of "Up From the Grave He Arose" and the victorious proclamation

of "He Lives, He Lives" from everyone who had joyfully gathered those Easter mornings.

Later, we would gather at our grandparents' home to enjoy what all the women had prepared to go with the delicious Easter ham. My grandmother always made sure each one of her ten grandchildren had his or her favorite dish prepared, thus that is why there were five different pies, plus several comfort foods such as chicken and dumplings or macaroni and cheese. Then, after a lively afternoon hunt for Easter eggs that had been squirreled away for our discovery by the pie-laden dads and uncles, my grandfather would invite each of the grandchildren to open our own personal piggy bank that he had fed each night as he emptied his pockets after work. Sitting in his easy chair, Grandpa



Clendinning

never failed to even up the amounts for any child that came up anywhere short of the five dollars we each received. Contentment filled the room as we sprawled out on their living room rug, happily counting our new wealth, oblivious to all the work that had

gone into making such a special family celebration.

Happy memories surround Easter for me, but until I became a believer, I didn't know how deeply rich and intensely personal the Easter celebration would become. Now, no matter the memories of my childhood, or the memories I am making for my family, the best way to celebrate Easter is by sharing the Good News of Jesus' resurrection with others who have yet to believe. As Christians, we are commanded and commissioned to tell others that Jesus Christ, the only one who ever lived a sin-free life, died for our sins, was buried, was raised from the dead, and lives today, saving all who by faith accept Him as

Savior. This ought not to be drudgery for believers, but delight. How happily we may share our family traditions with others at work or even joyfully tell our holiday plans to our neighbors, but are we eagerly sharing the Good News about Jesus — news that will alter their eternal destination?

This week's lesson in Matthew 28 recounts the eagerness and joy that was expressed by the first witnesses to Christ's resurrection. Scriptures recall how the women had arisen in the dawn hours, most likely dressed in appropriate mourning attire, wholly prepared to ready their friend's body for burial. Their grief had to be overwhelming as they quietly made their way to Jesus' tomb for the heartrending task of washing and wrapping his badly beaten and crucified body in burial cloths. None of the six or more women who had gathered were anticipating that Jesus was resurrected; indeed, they were perplexed to find His body was gone and believed that someone had moved or stolen the body. How their hearts must have ached at this new loss.

Now imagine their indescribable joy as the news from the angel about Jesus' resurrection sank in. Did the name "Lazarus" perhaps spring to their minds as they recalled when resurrection power had once before been experienced? Having grasped hold of the Good News that their teacher and friend was now alive, their joy could not be contained. Scripture says they hurried away and ran to tell the disciples. It's even possible they abandoned their observance of Jewish law and societal propriety by gathering up their skirts and dashing off like the exuberant young girls they once were.

How it must have thrilled God to see His children in total joy, eagerly scampering away to share the Good News of Jesus' resurrection! No grandparent on earth could match his enjoyment! How it would delight Him today if we would dash away with the same great enthusiasm and liveliness, eager to tell the Good News: He is alive! Jesus lives!

*Clendinning is a member of First Church, Brandon.*

## Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing,

and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: [baptistrecord@mbcb.org](mailto:baptistrecord@mbcb.org).

THE BAPTIST  
**Record**



# Katrina relief effort still huge, in need of volunteers

LAKESHORE, Miss. (BP and local reports) — When Hurricane Katrina struck last August, Lakeshore Church relocated — but not because members voted.

Katrina's winds and waves smashed the wood-frame structure. What wasn't blown away floated away from the site about a mile from Mississippi's Gulf Coast. Members recovered the pulpit, a few lumber scraps, and the steeple.

Working on his doctoral degree at New Orleans Seminary, Lakeshore's pastor Don Elbourne relinquished his studies to coordinate disaster relief efforts in the predominantly Catholic neighborhood. The Southern Baptist Convention, the North American Mission Board, the Mississippi Baptist Convention, Gulf Coast Association, and countless Southern Baptist volunteers from 38 states have rallied with Elbourne and Lakeshore's members to turn the devastated area in Katrina's path into a crossroads of crisis and Christ-likeness.

The church site looks like a military supply depot. There's a Quonset hut structure for a church building, a tent village and small bunkhouses for volunteers, a screened-in kitchen and mess hall on a concrete slab foundation where a neighbor's house once stood, shower trailers, and a large tent stocked with canned goods, clothing, and bottled water.

rehabbing local houses that withstood Katrina's wrath by gutting and disinfecting them. Then, they follow by roofing, plumbing, wiring, sheet-rocking, and painting the homes.

Elbourne expects this kind of work will continue for at least two years.

A sawmill donated by Sierra First Church in Alta, Calif., provides lumber to rebuild some houses from the ground up. Volunteers already used such lumber to build a house for a Lakeshore member who opted not to go back to driving his 18-wheeler, but instead to stay in the area helping at the sawmill.

Volunteers also used sawmill lumber to construct interior walls for the church sanctuary, a mostly metal structure that went up in less than a week. "We wanted to put up something quick that didn't exhaust our volunteer resources, because I just couldn't bring myself to spend too much of those resources on the church property when other people are still living in tents," said Elbourne, noting that all of Lakeshore's members lost their homes.

Concerning the sawmill, "The problem is not finding enough trees to mill," Elbourne said. "We've got enough trees to run that saw mill constantly. What we need are the volunteers to do it."

Scott Saunders, pastor of Sierra First



**SPECIAL DONATION** — Scott Saunders (right) is aided by Mike Seipert at a portable sawmill donated by Sierra First Church in Alta, Calif., where Saunders is pastor and Seipert is a member. Lumber from the sawmill is used to rebuild houses damaged when Hurricane Katrina blew through Lakeshore. (BP photo by Norm Miller)



**BIG HUG** — "Bless your heart. Just hugging your neck and being able to tell you what I feel inside, you just don't know how much it does," said Pam Ramage, whose home was blown away by Hurricane Katrina, to Lakeshore Church pastor Don Elbourne. (BP photo by Norm Miller)

About 300 people, some of whom must walk for miles, frequent the compound daily for life's necessities.

"I want to thank you for everything," said local resident Pam Ramage, who, with her cart of sundries in tow, stopped to talk with Elbourne.

"We lost our home. Never found it. It's gone. We were so down because when you lose everything it takes a while to get over it," said Ramage, formerly of Heron Bay, a waterfront community Katrina obliterated. "You've fed me. You've clothed me, and you've lifted my spirits. I don't know how many times, and I want to thank you," Ramage told Elbourne. "Everybody I see I want to hug their necks and say, 'Thank you, God.'"

"If it hadn't have been for the church groups, we'd still be stuck at day one after the hurricane. It's just a God-send for all of these people to give up their vacations, their time off. And the college kids coming down, you know, it just makes you so close to God because you know he's there and He's helping us."

Elbourne said volunteer teams are

Church, told Baptist Press his church's service to Lakeshore was a debt repayment, of sorts. More than 30 years ago, volunteers from Mississippi traveled to California to construct Sierra's building. In return, the church has committed to send a team of volunteers to Lakeshore once a month for a year. The church has also loaned Lakeshore the use of three vans.

Elbourne is quick to note not only the generosity of churches, but also how God uses it in astonishingly timely ways. Just after volunteers completed Lakeshore's makeshift sanctuary, Elbourne and a Lakeshore member were standing in the building, scratching their heads in ignorance about how to install the electrical wiring.

In those very moments, a man — a stranger — walked in, introduced himself, and apologized for interrupting, saying he was from another town and wanted to donate his time and professional expertise. The stranger was an electrical engineer.

On another day, Elbourne said a group of college-aged volunteers who had been painting came to him, needing

more paint rollers, but Elbourne had none. "Just then," said Elbourne, "a delivery truck pulls up, and the driver brings me a box. I sign for it and open it. It was a box of paint rollers."

Elbourne is reflective on the ministry and his personal walk with God. Citing the debate over whether God caused the hurricane or simply allowed it to happen, Elbourne said, "If God was not completely in control of Katrina, I couldn't have made it. To think that God simply steps back and allows things to happen would've been too much for me to move forward in, but that solid confidence that He is completely in control gives me the confidence to move forward in the knowledge that His ultimate purposes will be seen."

The depth of Elbourne's Scripture reading and singing of hymns in church "are so much richer" now, he added. "Psalm 46, that the Lord is my refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble — that's not just a metaphor any more; it's a firm reality. Even the metaphors we sing: 'My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. All other ground is sinking sand' — [that's a] firm reality."

The text for Lakeshore's first worship service after the storm, Elbourne said, was from Habakkuk chapter three — a passage that details the absence of life's provisions.

"But I will rejoice in the God of my salvation." We could say that before, but when you're standing there with nothing, that confidence in God is very strong."

Just days after the storm, Elbourne stood on the church site, surveying the rubble of what remained. "The pulpit was stuck in the woods to my left, the roof line of another destroyed building to my right, the piano busted up in the woods in front of me — nothing was where it used to be but the assurance of God had not moved. He's still in heaven, ruling, reigning, governing, the universe according to His plan — and to go to bed at night with so many things still needing to be done, and to be able to say, 'God, I'm glad I'm not you,' that's a comforting thing to me," Elbourne said.

A special telephone number and e-mail address have been established for Mississippi Baptists interested in volunteering during the Hurricane Katrina recovery effort. The telephone hotline number is (601) 292-3206. The e-mail address is mbcdbdisasterrelief@mbcb.org. If offering assistance via e-mail, please include your full name and a return telephone number, so that we may contact you directly regarding details.

For more information, visit the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board web site at [www.mbcdb.org](http://www.mbcdb.org), and click on the Hurricane Katrina box.



**MEETING NEEDS** — Local residents of Lakeshore receive free food and other staples at Lakeshore Church's food supply tent. About 300 people visit the tent daily. (BP photo by Norm Miller)